

U.S. Military Academy - Soldiers' Hospital
(Family Housing)
Southwest of the intersection of Washington
Road and Lee Road
U.S. Military Academy
West Point
Orange County
New York

HABS No. NY-5708-17

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - SOLDIERS' HOSPITAL
(FAMILY HOUSING)

LOCATION: Southwest of the intersection of Washington Road and Lee Road, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 18.585990.4583500.

PRESENT OWNER
AND OCCUPANT: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE: Family Housing (3 families).

SIGNIFICANCE: The Soldier's Hospital is representative of a standard Quartermaster hospital plan used on many army posts. At the Academy, this hospital for enlisted men represents a non-academic service building from the late-nineteenth century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1892. The Annual Report of 1891 mentions that the Soldiers' Hospital is "well advanced" and the Annual Report for 1892 lists the hospital as completed.
2. Architect: Office of the Quartermaster General (Crashof).
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Office of the Quartermaster General.
5. Original plans and construction: The original form and function of the building followed standard Quartermaster plans. The higher central section contained the operating room, laboratory, dispensary, mess, isolation room, kitchen office, and storerooms. The one-story wings contained the wards and the cellar contained the morgue. Drawings for the 1936 conversion of the building, which had already been converted from a MP Barracks, to officer's quarters, are the earliest known plans and most likely reflect the original plan. (See sketch plan of conjectural original plan.) Portions of the porch were damaged in a fire and were rebuilt in 1907. Photograph #116a (undated) in the Stockbridge Collection, U.S.M.A. Archives, shows an awning over the tripartite window on the south elevation, two vents on the roof of each wing and a wooden porch balustrade.

6. Alterations and additions: Despite its earlier conversion to an MP Barracks, the 1936 conversion to officer's quarters most severely altered the building. Undated exterior alterations include the following: east elevation south bay below porch converted to garage; mezzanine windows filled with plywood; aluminum storm windows and doors (all elevations); basement window altered. north elevation shiplap siding added for garage enclosure; new bivalve door. west elevation porch posts replaced; porch floor tongue-and-groove replaced by decking; concrete stairs for north wing of porch; brick piers replaced by concrete block piers; door and transom bricked-up; second floor windows altered; new stairs to second floor; new second story porch; concrete stairs for south wing. south elevation new concrete block bulkhead; shiplap siding for garage enclosure.

Annual Reports mention the following repairs, alterations and additions: iron fence erected (1896); stone and brick bridge (1899); stone wall and rear picket fence (1900); new operating room (1901); steam heat for the north ward (1901); unidentified addition (1901); painting and calcimining interior walls, ceiling and woodwork (1902); "important changes and improvements" (1903); terazzo floor by Schilling Company (1903); "plumbing at Soldiers' Hospital is entirely renovated making a lavatory of each ward composed of shower baths, water-closets, and basins, with linen closets opening upon the hall. The entrance into the lavatories is from the wards through a vestibule. A third lavatory for the attendants has been placed upon the second floor of the hospital." (1903); three new bathrooms and a linen room (1904); wire screens for windows and storm windows (1904).

Drawings for the 1936 conversion to officer's quarters list the following alterations: replace metal ceilings; remove plumbing fixtures; remove existing terrazzo floors and marble wainscoting in bathrooms; remove existing partitions; new wood floors throughout; new stud and gypsum partitions; new treads on hall stairs; new closets; new doors cut; old doorways blocked; west door replaced with two windows; new doors in wings. See drawings "Conversion of the old M.P. Barracks to Officers' Quarters #126" for other alterations, Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S.M.A.

B. Historical Context:

The Soldiers' Hospital was built in the Early Enlisted Men's Area. " Beginning in 1890 this area experienced a concerted building program centering around a long awaited new soldiers' hospital (#126). Completed by 1892, this building replaced an 1851 hospital near the site of the present field house. This two-story building with one-story side wings was erected on a knoll between the sites of the old artillery and cavalry vegetable gardens. The higher elevation, with greater availability

of fresh air, and the benefit of sewage running away from the facility, combined with the pleasing low-lying design, add up to a significant improvement over the earlier hospital" (Lange). For a complete contextual history of the Enlisted Men's Area and of the academy and post, see HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

The Annual Report for 1892 mentions that "Dr. G. Herbert Brown, of Highlands Falls, N.Y. was employed to take charge of the soldiers' hospital from January 13 to 22, 1892, both dates inconclusive, during the absence on leave of Capt. William Fitzhugh Carter, assistant surgeon...." The report also states that the Post Surgeon was in charge of the cadet hospital and the Assistant Surgeon was in charge of the soldiers' hospital. H. S. Kilbourne is also mentioned as an Assistant Surgeon in 1892, Capt. C. N. B. Macauley as Assistant Surgeon in 1893, and 1st Lt. Franklin M. Kemp as Assistant Surgeon in 1899. The same 1892 Annual Report lists the following treatment statistics for enlisted men: "Injuries 88, diseases 339; civilians living on reservation (officers and soldiers families and employees and their families): Injuries: 29; diseases 972."

The Annual Report of 1909 makes a case that the "semimodern building of 24 beds" is inadequate for 700 enlisted men and the growing number of civilian employees and that enlargement would not be the best solution since the hospital was inconvenient to the new expansion of the post, particularly the new cavalry and artillery barracks at the north end of the post, between one and two miles away. Consequently, a new hospital was recommended and built.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This building is a simple brick structure built to standard designs from the Army Quartermaster's office in the late nineteenth century.
2. Condition of fabric: The condition is good except for wood members and trim of the porch and eaves; the slate roof was scheduled for replacement in 1982.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Soldiers' Hospital is a two-and-a-half story central block with one-story wings above a raised basement. The east facade is composed of a symmetrical thirteen bays on the first floor level with a five bay second story. Overall dimensions are 128' x 42'. The central pavilion is 42' x 42'-6" and the wings are 43' x 26'-6".

2. Foundations: Foundations are brick, 18" thick and stuccoed on the exterior above grade.
3. Walls: Walls are red brick laid in a five course American Bond. Openings have non-gauged, flat jack arches.
4. Structure systems, framing: Load-bearing brick walls measure 14" on the first and second floors. The roof framing consists of four chamfered wooden beams which angle toward the apex of the roof from each corner and disappear into the ceiling. Four vertical posts with down braces support beams in the center of the attic space.
5. Porches: A covered porch encircles the building. Resting on brick piers, the porch has a tongue-and-groove floor and turned posts supporting a standing-seam tin roof (see HABS photograph). Sections of the floor were being replaced with open-space decking along with some posts in 1982. Original wooden balustrade and handrails have been replaced by metal pipe rails.
6. Chimneys: Four rectangular brick chimneys rise above the roof, two on each of the north and south sides. Stabilizing bars now support each chimney.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: In 1936 the number of exterior doorways on the first floor was increased from four to seven. Original doorways were axial on each elevation. With the conversion to quarters, doorways were cut from windows in each wing on the east and west elevations and the original west doorway was filled. Original doorways are bivalve with transom windows while the newer doorways have single doors with single light transoms. The principal doors on the east have four upper panels of glass each. The newer doors in the wings have one large upper glass panel and the east and west doors are solid. The transom window above the north doorway has been replaced by a recent stain glass window. A second story door on the west was added in 1936; this is a single glass upper panel with a two light transom. There appears to have been one basement doorway originally (the west) but now a south doorway provides additional access.
 - b. Windows: Windows determined to be original fall into a pattern of hinged, six-light windows in the basement; six-over-six double-hung sash on the first floor; and thirty-over-six single or double-hung sash on the second floor. Later replacement windows tend to be one-over-one or two-over-two double-hung aluminum sash. Other windows include first floor mezzanine windows above the porch roof (filled with plywood now); and a tripartite second floor window on the south elevation.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Both the central block and the wings have a hip roof covered with slate. Portions of the roof were scheduled for repair or replacement in 1982.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The cornice has a simple bed and crown fascia molding. The gutter is concealed in the soffit and has external downspouts.
- c. Dormers: A hip roof dormer with slate roof and sides is centered on each elevation of the roof. These have a three light wooden bivalve casement window.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: In 1936 the Soldiers' Hospital was converted from a MP Barracks to three officer's quarters. The first floor was divided into two quarters and the second floor became the third. The 1936 drawings indicate that a fourth set of quarters occupied the north end of the basement while the central and south end were used as maid's quarters and storage. (See sketch plan for present arrangement.)
2. Stairways: The principal first-to-second floor staircase is a 3'-6" wide, quarter turn dog-leg with an intermediate landing. Treads were replaced on this stair in 1936 but it retains its original newel post and balustrade. The staircase continues up to the attic in a similar fashion. A later straight run staircase was added in the north wing to provide access to the basement.
3. Flooring: All hardwood floors on the first and second floors date from 1936. Original pine floors survive in the attic and on the west side of the basement's south wing. What appears to be original period floor boards can be seen above the joists in central area of the basement. Areas of the basement have concrete or new hardwood floors.
4. Walls and ceiling finish: With the exception of exposed brick walls in parts of the basement, walls are either plaster on brick or plaster on gypsum board (later partitions). Metal ceilings were removed in 1936 and replaced by gypsum board. Baseboards appear to be original except on partition walls. Ceilings are 14' in the wings and 12' in the central pavilion.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Doorways and doors have been greatly altered. See conjectural floor plan sketch for the location of original solid panel doors. Many of these have been blocked-up or moved.

- b. Windows: Clerestory windows (18" high) in the wings have been blocked-up. There is no interior window trim of interest.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: The only remaining decorative features are three simple wooden mantels with chamfered pilasters. These are found along with their quarry tile hearths in the east bedrooms of the central pavilion and in the east bedrooms of the second floor.
- 7. Hardware: There is no original hardware of interest.
- 8. Mechanical equipment: There is no original mechanical equipment of interest.
- 9. Original furnishings: There are no original furnishings.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The Soldiers' Hospital faces east toward Washington Road. It is circled on the north and south by paved driveways. Immediately to the west is building #127, which was built as a nurses quarters (1914) and which was once connected to the Soldiers' Hospital by a covered passageway (1936 drawings). To the north is the Hospital Steward's Quarters #374 (HABS No. NY-5708-18), built in 1894. The hospital is located between enlisted men's single family housing units to the east of Washington Road (see HABS No. NY-5708-52 and NY-5708-53) and to the west of Biddle Loop, which are contemporary with its construction.
- 2. Historic landscape: The building is now surrounded by shrubs which have been planted close to the porch. A parking area has been created directly in front of the building.
- 3. Outbuildings: Nothing is known of any original outbuildings.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: The earliest known measured drawings are those for the 1936 conversion. These are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy.
- B. Early views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections.
- C. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources: Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives.

Crashof, Bethanie C. "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

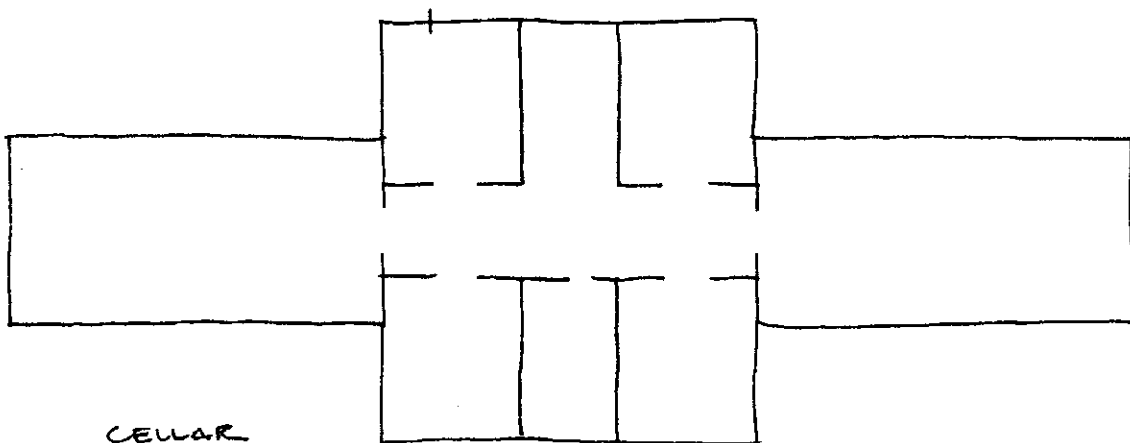
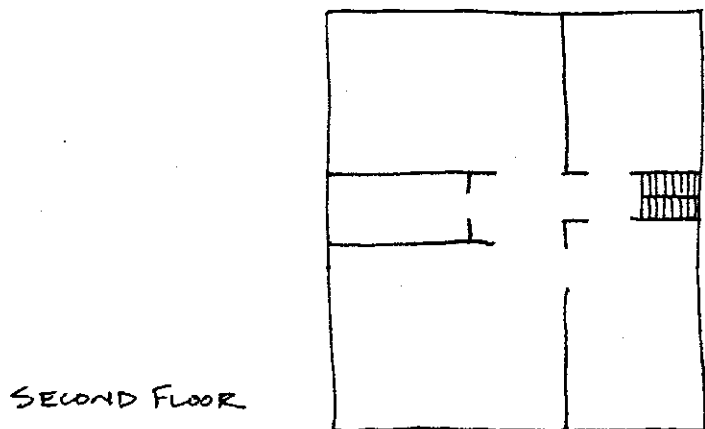
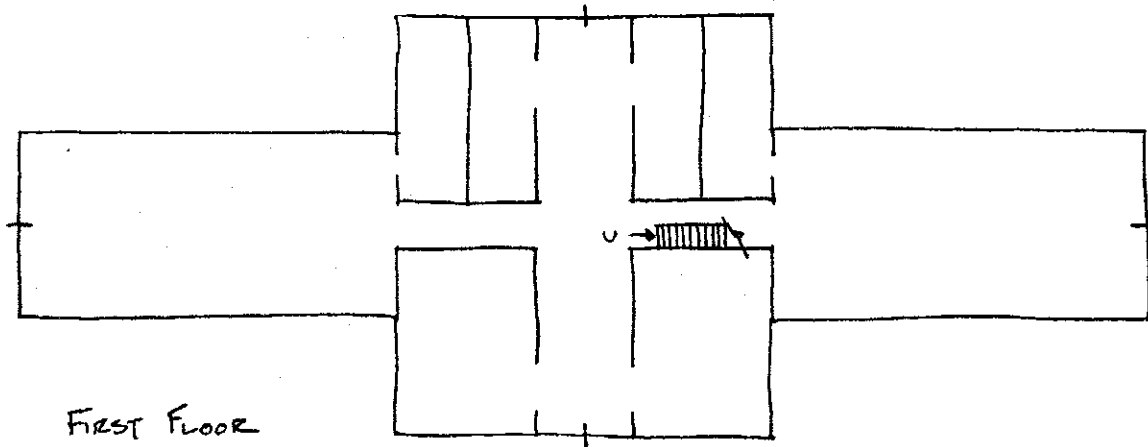
Lange, Robie S. "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: National Archives, Washington, D.C.

E. Supplemental Material:

1. Conjectural sketch of original plan.
2. Sketch of present plan.

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SOLDIERS'
HOSPITAL

CONJECTURAL
ORIGINAL PLANS
BASED ON 1936
DRAWINGS.

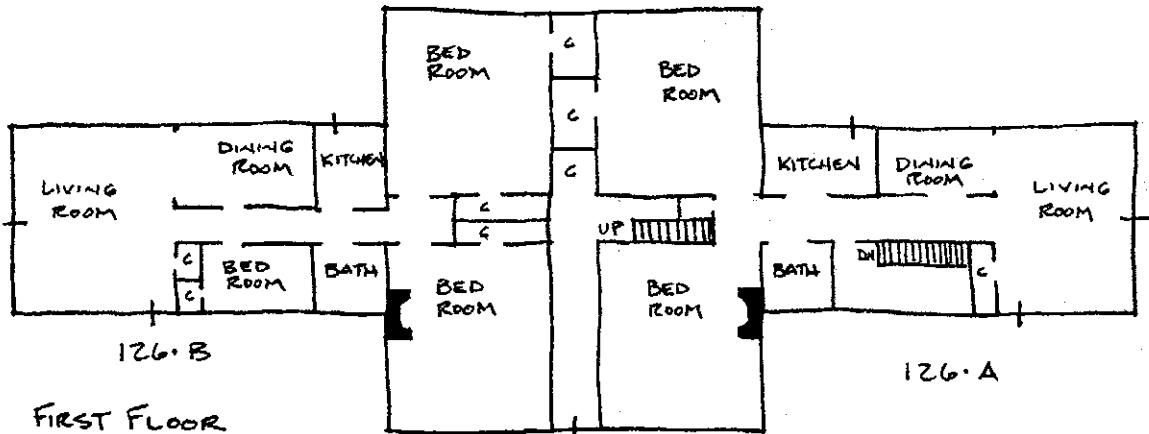
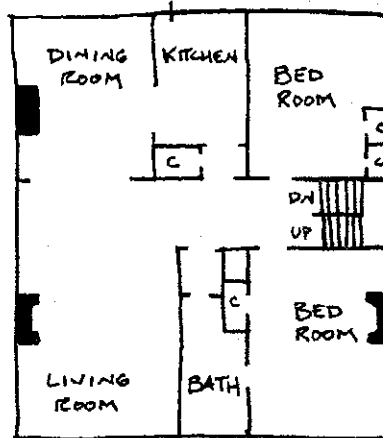
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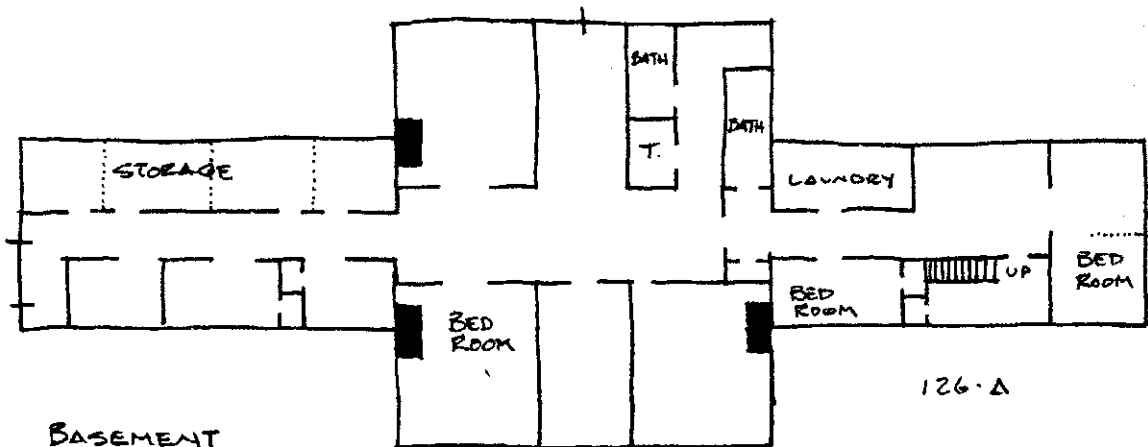
E. Supplemental Material
2. Sketch of present plan.

SOLDIERS'
HOSPITAL
H.A.B.S.
NY-5708-17
FLOOR PLANS
NOT TO SCALE
T.C.M. 10/84

SECOND STORY
126.C



FIRST FLOOR



BASEMENT

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the United States Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology." This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr., architectural historian, in 1982-1985 based on fieldwork conducted in 1982.